



March 16, 2023

Re: MSA and MCPA Position on SF73

Dear Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives:

On behalf of more than 300 police chiefs and 87 county sheriffs, the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association (MSA) are deeply concerned about several aspects of Senate File 73 as they erode public safety in our state and strongly oppose the bill as it is currently written.

First, we believe the bill still blatantly ignores the realities of the illegal drug trade, which continues to wreak havoc in communities large and small across our state and our country. SF73 does not ensure a strict, robust regulatory framework is in place prior to the date when selling cannabis for recreational use would be legalized in Minnesota. We have learned from other states that the legal use of cannabis must be done in a tight regulatory structure to combat black market sales that will still exist when such a law is enacted. As an example, the state of New York legalized adult-use cannabis more than a year ago, but New York City just issued its first dispensary licenses this past November. The result has been cannabis for sale everywhere, including head shops and even from card tables on street corners. Some dealers brazenly sell in public. The same can be said for California, where illegal sellers and growers continue to undercut the legal sellers and are thriving six years after the state legalized the sale of cannabis for recreational use. SF73 as written would allow for an individual to run what in essence would be a commercial enterprise out of their backyard. The MSA and MCPA can't support such a bill.

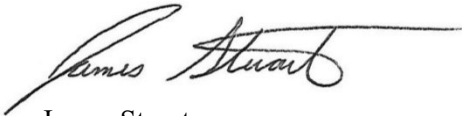
Second, while the bill proposes a grant program and research of a roadside test for tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), law enforcement cannot support a bill that will make our roads more dangerous. Since Colorado became one of the first states to legalize recreational marijuana in 2012, citations for impaired driving in which marijuana was perceived as being at least one of the substances involved increased by 120% from 2014 to 2020, according to a report from the Colorado Department of Public Safety. In Canada, which legalized recreational marijuana in 2018, cases of drug-impaired driving rose 43% in the first year after legalization and impaired driving overall increased by 19%, according to the Washington Post. Safe and legal use is not possible with the absence of an accurate roadside test.

Lastly, we don't want a repeat of what happened last legislative session when lawmakers authorized the sale of certain edibles and beverages infused with (THC) extracted from hemp. That legislation provided limited regulation of the products and was passed without any input from law enforcement. We still have serious and significant concerns that need to be addressed from that legislation, and SF73 will only compound those concerns. Local police departments and Sheriff's Offices don't have the funding for training, or the resources needed to keep our communities safe and SF73 neglects to address these very real and significant public safety challenges.

Sincerely,



Jeff Potts  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association



James Stuart  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Sheriffs Association